Katherine and Thomas Detre, 1956

Vivian and Jeffrey Romoff, 1963

TRAILING SPOUSES IN THE LEAD

In her new book, *Beyond the Bounds, A History of UPMC*, Mary Brignano tells how a certain academic medical center came to be, beginning with psychiatrist Thomas Detre's enlistment of a few key people: *[After confirming that he would leave Yale University for the University of Pittsburgh, Detre] began recruiting talented managers to staff WPIC [Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic]. One of his first picks was Vivian Goodman Romoff, his chief psychiatric nurse at Yale-New Haven. Both he and she … demanded a strong, collaborative partnership between physicians and nurses. … "I wanted her to come to Pittsburgh. She said she had a husband, and I thought that was unfortunate," Detre deadpans. "But I wanted to chat with him."*

This "chat" would change Pittsburgh. The 27-year-old who appeared for an interview in Dr. Detre's New Haven office was Jeffrey A. Romoff—brilliant, brash, hard-driving, idealistic. … In 1972, he worked in "a very small mental health counseling planning group in Waterbury, Conn."

Under Jeffrey Romoff's eventual leadership, UPMC would become one of the nation's largest nonprofit global health enterprises. Before that, Vivian Romoff would build one of the largest psychiatric nursing services in the country here. Detre himself held a number of positions in Pittsburgh, including president of UPMC and Pitt's senior vice chancellor for the health sciences. Also joining Detre in Pittsburgh way back when, of course, was his wife, Katherine Detre, an MD and DrPH. That "trailing spouse" became a Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology at Pitt, regarded as one of the foremost experts in her field. Sadly, both Vivian Romoff and Katherine Detre died of cancer—Katherine in 2006, and Vivian in 1983 (at the age of 37, as Thomas Detre and her husband were beginning to plan a new cancer center for Pittsburgh). *—Erica Lloyd*

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